



**Issuance Date:** March 27, 2008

**SUBJECT: Amendment No. 01 to RFTOP under Project SEARCH – Supporting Evaluation and Research to Combat HIV/AIDS IQC  
TASK ORDER FOR SERVICES: “Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Operations Research”**

Reference: IQC Contract Nos.: GHH-I-00-07-00023-00 Trustees of Boston University,  
GHH-I-00-07-00028-00 Family Health International,  
GHH-I-00-07-00029-00 Futures Group International, LLC  
GHH-I-00-07-00032-00 Johns Hopkins University,  
GHH-I-00-07-00034-00 Population Council.

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The RFTOP under Project SEARCH – Supporting Evaluation and Research to Combat HIV/AIDS IQC TASK ORDER FOR SERVICES: “Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Operations Research” is hereby modified for the following reasons:

- I. Revise the RFTOP; and
- II. Provide responses to questions received from offerors.

The RFTOP is hereby modified as follows:

**I. Revise the RFTOP**

1. The deadline for proposals was extended to **April 16, 2008 at 11:00 AM EST**.
2. Cover Letter, page 1 should read:  
“Proposals are due no later than **April 16, 2008 at 11:00 AM EST** and shall be delivered to the following addressee. Proposals received after this deadline **will not be considered**. Proposals should be submitted in sealed envelopes with the name and address of the contractor; telegraphic or fax applications are not authorized for this RFTOP and will not be accepted.”
3. In Section V. ANTICIPATED RESULTS AND PROPOSED INDICATORS, part B. Indicators, first paragraph should read:

“The OVC Operations Research Project task order will be funded with HIV/AIDS funds. The HIV/AIDS funds are subject to the Emergency Plan requirements, thus the successful offeror will report on all relevant PEPFAR indicators, when applicable. The current minimum PEPFAR indicators for OVC are:”

4. Delete Section VI. DELIVERABLES AND PROGRAM MEASURES and replace with the following:

#### **“A. Project Deliverables**

The OVC Operations Research Project Task Order deliverables will include:

- A compendium of methods, tools, promising practices and findings from all research studies and evaluations, with periodic dissemination of findings in interim reports, at a frequency to be determined in consultation with the CTO.
- A summary report on tools, methods, and promising program models with an analysis of the replicability, feasibility, scale up and sustainability of program models.
- A list of peer-reviewed publications produced by the task order.
- A final Task Order report, highlighting achievements with reference to established work plans and strategic objectives of the task order.
- A meeting/consultation in Washington for USG OVC staff and key OVC stakeholders, presenting key findings from specific task categories.
- Country-specific reports, as appropriate, based on requirements of specific activities requested by the field.

All products and deliverables will be in the public domain. The contractor will not have copyright on these products.

For any public health evaluations conducted under this task order, prior to implementation, the evaluation protocols (design, methods, human subjects procedures) will be reviewed and cleared by the CTO in consultation with the PEPFAR Public Health Evaluation (PHE) Subcommittee.

#### **B. Reporting Requirements**

Upon award of the task order, USAID will work with the offeror to finalize performance measures and the methods to effectively measure, monitor, and assess the task order’s progress and impact. The format for reporting requirements will be established as part of the offeror’s work plan. The work plan should be submitted within 60 days of the award of the task order with the projected expenditures. In addition, the task order shall require the offeror to provide the Task Order CTO a quarterly report that summarizes activities taken, both core funded and Mission funded, progress made, plans for the upcoming quarter, expenditures, and pipeline.

A final report, at the end of the task order, should highlight accomplishments against work plans and strategic objectives of the task order. The report should include: an executive summary of the task order's accomplishments in achieving results; an overall description of the task order activities and attainment of results by country or region, as appropriate; important OVC research evidence findings; address lessons learned and best practices; and summarize achievements in terms of capacity building and results utilization.

Reporting of PEPFAR program indicators are applicable when an OVC research activity involves development, implementation (OVC service delivery), and evaluation of a program model or intervention. Specific reporting requirements will be specified in the scope of work of respective activities.

### **C. Task Order Performance Monitoring**

Offerors should provide a simple, illustrative performance monitoring plan (PMP) with indicators that will be used to evaluate the contributions/effectiveness of core-funded global technical leadership activities. Describe how the PMP links to, and helps achieve, the overall strategic objective of the task order. A table with PMP indicators, and the methods, types and sources of data collection for these indicators shall be included in an appendix.

The Task Order CTO may conduct yearly performance reviews of the contractor by using other indicators mutually agreed upon by the Task Order CTO and the offeror in the first 90 days of the award. A final performance review of the task order may be scheduled for the final year of the task order. An external evaluation of the Task Order may be held in conjunction with any evaluations scheduled for the overall SEARCH contract."

5. In Section VIII. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS, A. Technical Proposal, B. Staffing, Management, Collaboration, and Past Performance, delete part B3. Past Performance and replace with the following:

#### **"B3. Past Performance and Performance Monitoring Plan**

*Past Performance:* Offerors should provide a self-assessment of their demonstrated institutional ability to plan, implement and support operational and applied research activities citing past performance examples. The examples must be for the past five years for efforts similar to the technical requirements of this RFTOP. Offerors should demonstrate technical accomplishments in applied research on HIV/AIDS service delivery and/or related policy improvement in developing countries, dissemination and utilization of research results, and capacity building of host-country organizations to produce and utilize applied research results. Include past performance forming collaborative partnerships with research and policy/advocacy organizations. Please include related program descriptions, list of tools/peer-reviewed publications/monographs, other knowledge management efforts, and any other relevant information in an appendix.

*Performance Monitoring Plan:* Offerors should provide an illustrative performance monitoring plan (PMP) with indicators that will be used to evaluate the contributions/effectiveness of core-funded global technical leadership activities. Describe how the PMP links to and helps achieve the overall strategic objective of this task order. A table with PMP indicators and the methods, types and sources of data collection for these indicators may be included in an appendix.”

6. In Section VIII. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS, A. Technical Proposal C. Cost Proposal, first paragraph should read:

“The Cost Proposal must be completely separate from the applicant's technical proposal. There is no page limitation on the Cost Proposal. Offerors shall submit a cost proposal for a 36-month task order operating period (starting July 1, 2008). Offerors shall submit their cost proposal in Microsoft Excel format with full access to all formulas and in the following Contract Line Item Number (CLIN) format. The following minimum cost breakdown should be provided: Salary and wages with detailed LOE, Fringe Benefits, Consultants, Travel, Transportation and Per Diem, Equipment and Supplies, Subcontracts, Grants under Contract, Other Direct Costs, Overhead, G&A, Material Overhead, Fee and any other Indirect Cost. Please break out the LOE per CLIN as applicable. For example, CLIN 1 (Salaries) should have an LOE chart for the 20% core funding component and an LOE chart for the 80% field funding component for the first three years of implementation. USAID will set the standard of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of 260 working days/year. USAID anticipates ordering 6.50 FTEs/year for the core funding and 26.00 FTEs/year for field support funding for three years of task order. Please adjust proposed budgets accordingly. Offerors must propose costs that are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with their respective technical proposals. The Cost Proposals should have a cover page with the title of the program, name of the organization(s) submitting the Proposal, contact person, telephone numbers, address, and e-mail. Cost proposal must be accompanied by detailed and comprehensive budget notes.”

7. In Section IX. EVALUATION CRITERIA, B. Staffing, Management, Collaboration, and Past Performance, delete B3. Past Performance and replace with the following:

“B3. Past Performance and Performance Monitoring Plan (10 points)

- Past performance of the offeror in planning, implementing and supporting operational and applied research activities of similar scope as specified in the RFTOP and forming collaborative partnerships with international research and policy/advocacy organizations; Demonstrated technical accomplishments in applied research on HIV/AIDS service delivery and/or related policy improvement in developing countries, dissemination and utilization of research results, and capacity building of host-country organizations to produce and utilize applied research results.

- Merits and feasibility of illustrative PMP and indicators that can be used to monitor core-funded OVC global technical leadership activities and measure progress toward achieving the strategic objectives of the task order.

Note: Any offeror lacking relevant past performance history (e.g., a sub-partner taking the lead on this task order) shall be given a “neutral” past performance rating that neither rewards nor penalizes that offeror.”

## **II. Responses to questions received by potential offerors.**

1. a. Section VI (Deliverables and Program Measures) of the RFTOP states that the Task Order requires both a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan (p. 12) and a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP, p. 14). There appears to be overlap between these two program measures. For example, both are intended to assess effectiveness of core-funded activities. Please differentiate between the two.

Answer: Please see Section IV revised in the RFTOP.

- b. Can a Performance-Monitoring Plan table be included as an appendix or rather is it considered a technical portion of the proposal?

Answer: A performance monitoring plan (PMP) table can be included as an appendix with a short, illustrative PMP description in the technical proposal (see Section IV revision for details).

- c. Section VI Part C (Deliverables and Program Measures, Periodic Reporting) on page 13 of the RFTOP requires offerors to “include in the proposal a work plan for the first year of implementation”. How should offerors account for field support when preparing the work plan?

Answer: Offerors may discuss, in their technical proposal, potential core-funded activities in Year 1. However, they are NOT expected to submit a work plan for Year 1. Once the task order is awarded, a work plan will be developed in consultation with the Task Order CTO. (Please refer to Section IV revision.)

2. Will all research conducted under this Task Order be considered a public health evaluation?

Answer: Some, but not all, activities may qualify to be public health evaluations.

3. Section VIII Part C (Instructions to Applicants, Cost Proposal) on page 22 of the RFTOP specifies the LOE levels for U.S.-based and overseas staff. Please differentiate between “Technical/Management” and “Implementation” staff.

Answer: Project Director, Deputy Project Director, and other senior task order technical personnel are considered “Technical/Management” staff.

“Implementation/Support” staff will include mid/lower level personnel involved in field implementation, data collection, data processing, and project support activities. FSN/TCN field staff may fall under either of these two categories.

4. Can offerors propose core staff that are field-based?

Answer: We do not expect any core-funded staff to be field-based (although very limited core funds can be used toward partial salary support of field staff in specific short-term global technical leadership efforts).

5. a. Since it is unknown at this time which Missions could potentially utilize this funding mechanism, will it be deemed responsive to use illustrative staffing and responsibilities based on the offeror’s current field staff structure?

b. Given that in-country work will depend on field support, and we do not know which Missions will buy in, how should we identify personnel costs for the budget: Do we need to submit resumes and biodata forms for individuals from illustrative countries?

Answer: Although existing field staff structure can be used for illustrative purposes, a successful offeror should have a flexible staffing plan to assume Mission-supported activities in multiple countries and regions (it is expected that the majority of task order activities will be in Sub-Saharan Africa). Country-level OVC operations research needs and priorities would determine actual staffing structure, and not vice versa. Resumes and biodata forms of existing staff in-country can be used for illustrative purposes as long as the offerors can assure that equivalent technical skills can be made available for carrying out similar Mission-supported task order activities elsewhere.

6. Section VIII Part C (Instructions to Applicants, Cost Proposal) on page 20 of the RFTOP states cost proposals should be presented “by country and by operating period as well as a summary for all countries and for the overall period of performance.” Please clarify whether these directions refer to the two case study countries described in VIII.A2.?

Answer: The country case studies are intended to allow offerors to demonstrate how they would design OVC operations research under varying field realities. This has applicability only to the technical proposal, and NOT to the cost proposal. Cost proposals DO NOT need to be presented “by country” (Section VIII.C. of the RFTOP has been accordingly revised).

7. a. Section VIII Part C (Instructions to Applicants, Cost Proposal) on page 22 of the RFTOP states offerors should submit a “summary of a breakdown of the anticipated costs of performing the work by task area.” Could USAID please clarify what is meant by “task area” in this section?

b. In the budget section (p.22) the RFTOP states that there should be a “summary of a breakdown of the anticipated costs of performing work by task area.” What is meant by task area?

c. Section VIII Part C (Instructions to Applicants, Cost Proposal) on page 23 of the RFTOP states “offeror’s proposed budgets must identify core funding cost components and field support cost components in the 3 year contract.” Since it is unknown at this time which Missions could potentially utilize this funding mechanism, please clarify what assumptions offerors should utilize in presenting field costs in the cost proposal, aside from the 26 FTE/year staffing indicated in the RFTOP.

d. Since “where the project will work depends in large part on Mission demand and funding availability” (page 7), how many countries (and in which regions) should be included in the proposed budget?

Answer: Since it is unknown at this time which Missions will use the funding mechanism during particular years, the field portion of the cost proposal may be illustrative, and based on the following assumptions in addition to the 26FTE/year staffing indicated in the RFTOP: Offerors should assume that for each of the three years of the program, five countries (all from Sub-Saharan Africa) will put field support into the mechanism, with two activities per country/per year (e.g. one systematic program evaluation and one small-scale study). It is understood that the actual costing of the field component will depend upon the number of countries that use the mechanism and the types of activities requested by country. The term “task areas,” in this context for cost calculations, means core funded global technical leadership activities versus Mission-funded country-specific activities.

8. a. Would USAID kindly consider extending the current closing date of 4 April 2008?

b. This RFTOP has a tight deadline, which is exacerbated by the fact that many offices are closed for a long holiday weekend. Is it possible for the proposal deadline to be extended?

Answer: The closing date has been extended to April 16, 2008, 11 AM EST.

9. Please clarify the differences between a “compendium of promising practices and findings” and “a promising practices report” listed under “Project Deliverables”, (Pg. 12).

Answer: A compendium is a detailed, comprehensive document with relevant models, methods, and tools shown in an appendix; whereas, a report is a short summary manuscript of models and best practices.

10. a. Under Monitoring and Evaluation, (Pg. 12) it is stated that “for any public health evaluations conducted under this task order, prior to implementation, the evaluation protocols (design, methods, human subjects procedures) will be reviewed and cleared by the CTO in consultation with the PEPFAR Public Health Evaluation (PHE) Subcommittee.” Does this review and clearance procedure include clearance for “ethical procedures”, i.e., IRB approvals? If yes, are local IRB approvals required first? How long does the PHE Subcommittee take before they clear evaluation protocols?

b. In doing the proposed time line, we need to know if PHE will be reviewing all the protocols and human subjects procedures and if so, how much time we should allow for this review.

Answer: The PHE protocol review may include substantive, technical, and statistical aspects of the study protocol. While the PHE review incorporates research ethics and human subjects aspects, it does not substitute for IRB review. IRB reviews may occur prior or subsequent to PHE review, as appropriate. Once a protocol is submitted, the PHE review is expected to take approximately 3-4 weeks.

11. Can you please define what is meant by “OR” in the context of this RFTOP: Will the project be OR in the sense of starting up new interventions and evaluating them, or is the project covering evaluation of existing programs only?

Answer: Operations research, in the context of this RFTOP, is broadly defined to include the following – case studies, surveys, qualitative assessments, and secondary data analyses to better understand OVC situation, needs, and service delivery challenges; formative research relevant to design of OVC interventions; data collection on the process of implementation of OVC interventions or service delivery approaches; experimental or quasi-experimental designs involving control groups/areas to measure intervention effectiveness and/or impact; and qualitative data collection related to experimental studies. Developing and testing new interventions; refining existing interventions and/or evaluating their effectiveness; and operations research endeavors aimed at promoting proven yet underutilized interventions come under the “operations research” scope of this task order.

12. Why does the RFTOP include program indicators when it does not include programmatic components?

Answer: Program indicators are applicable when the scope of work involves development, implementation (service delivery), and evaluation of a program intervention. They are not applicable for activities that are external evaluations of existing programs.



13. For the case studies, are we to prepare our responses assuming the countries are hypothetical or are we to develop the case studies around real countries that match the hypothetical country scenarios provided?

Answer: The countries (country X and country Y) mentioned for this case study are hypothetical. Offerors may feel free to use real country examples if specific country scenarios match closely with the hypothetical country situations specified in the RFTOP.

14. Can you please define OVC? Do you mean orphans due to HIV/AIDS only, or do you mean all OVC?

Answer: This RFTOP covers OVC programs as defined in PL 109-95. Vulnerability extends beyond HIV/AIDS. OVC due to all causes including HIV/AIDS, war and conflict, abuse, disaster, trafficking, disability, and other vulnerabilities are eligible for the provisions under PL 109-95.

15. a. Why is there a \$100,000 limit per year on the grants that can be awarded under this task order?
- b. Please clarify how many “limited number of small grants” are allowed under this contract, (Pg. 8)?

Answer: Small grants are intended primarily for use by Missions for field-supported activities. Anything more than \$100,000 per year can be awarded through sub-contract arrangements. USAID/W does not intend to use small grants under core-funded activities.

16. Please describe the process by which USAID/W and Missions will request OVC program research activities from the awardee.

Answer: USAID/W will request OVC global technical leadership activities based on headquarters determined program/policy needs and global program demands. Country-level funding (PEPFAR and other funds) for in-country operations research activities would come in as field support.

17. When deciding which OVC interventions to evaluate in a given country, it can be hard to separate out what is an OVC intervention from what is a general household strengthening intervention, or a schools-strengthening intervention, and are such dichotomies useful when all are potentially contributing to the wellbeing of vulnerable children? Does USAID have inclusion criteria in mind, or is it the task of the awardee to propose such criteria?

Answer: A comprehensive USG strategy for OVC programming includes, but not limited to, the following core program areas – health care (general health care and HIV/AIDS care); food and nutritional support; shelter and care; protection;

psychosocial support; education and vocational training; and economic opportunity/strengthening. Please refer to the USAID 2007 Annual Report ([http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACK053.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACK053.pdf)) and the PEPFAR OVC program strategy (<http://www.pepfar.gov/guidance/78217.htm>) for details of OVC programming and types of interventions.

18. a. The RFTOP states that core funding will comprise approximately 20% of the project, and field funding will comprise the remaining 80%. Could USAID provide guidance on the total potential funding amount that is available under this task order?

b. Is there a minimum or a maximum budget per year that offerors should propose?

Answer: No. Please refer to LOE levels on page 22.

19. The cost proposal section refers to CLINs (p.20). Can you please identify what the CLINs are that should be used for the budget?

Answer: CLIN 1 should represent core funding and CLIN 2 field funding.

20. Can we use a font smaller than 12 point for the tables/charts/time line, etc. (i.e. graphics)?

Answer: Yes.

21. Is there a specific format required for the Past Performance? (Section B3, page 20)

Answer: The offeror shall complete past performance information form (see attached below).

22. Is there a minimum number of Past Performances that should be included? (Section B3, page 20)

Answer: No.

Lisa M. Bilder  
Agreement Officer  
M/OAA/GH/OHA  
Office of Acquisition and Assistance

End of Amendment No. 01

## PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION.

PERFORMANCE REPORT - SHORT FORM
PART I: Award Information (to be completed by Prime)
1. Name of Awarding Entity:
2. Award Number:
3. Award Type:
4. Award Value (TEC): (if sub agreement, sub agreement value)
5. Problems: (if problems encountered on this award, explain corrective action taken)
6. Contacts: (Name, Telephone Number and E-mail address)
6a. Agreement Officer:
6b. Technical Officer (CTO):
6c. Other:
7. Recipient:
8. Title/Brief Description of Product/Service Provided:
9. Information Provided in Response to RFP No. :
PART II: Performance Assessment (to be completed by Agency)
1. Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets, and cooperation and effectiveness of the Prime in fixing problems. Comment:
2. Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting. Comment:
3. Timeliness of performance, including adherence to contract schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient operation of tasks. Comment:
4. Customer satisfaction, including satisfactory business relationship to clients, initiation and management of several complex activities simultaneously, coordination among subcontractors and developing country partners, prompt and satisfactory correction of problems, and cooperative attitude in fixing problems. Comment:
5. Effectiveness of key personnel including: effectiveness and appropriateness of personnel for the job; and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified. Comment:

[Note: The actual dollar amount of sub agreement, if any, (awarded to the Prime) must be listed in Block 4 instead of the Total Estimated Cost (TEC) of the overall contract. In addition, a Prime may submit attachments to this past performance table if the spaces provided are inadequate; the evaluation factor(s) must be listed on any attachments.]